

## First time

By **Zoe Chaine**

*Marlboro Elementary School, Grade 8*

I check my watch for about the hundredth time. I'm not complaining or anything, but aren't trains that cost over 50 dollars to ride on supposed to be on time? Yeah, and husbands are supposed to stay loyal. And well-loved pets are supposed to stay alive. And the human race isn't supposed to be killing itself off. But shall we not go there?

I shake my head and consider leaving this waiting room, where so many peoples' hopes have turned to colors of the wall — a kind of depressing wash-out gray. Too much hope isn't good for a little place like this. It just seems to attract lawyers. And Wal-Marts. Strange how that is. Big companies and money-loving people like to thrive on the happiness of others because, more likely than not, they don't have any themselves. Hell with it, I'll trade my happiness any day for the checking account of some big-shot lawyer. But then, right now I'd probably give my soul to the devil if he asked for it in exchange for the train coming. Maybe I'm exaggerating a little bit.

I shift in my seat to look down the tracks. Nope, nothing yet. Well actually, I've never really had any need for my soul, not yet anyway. I suppose it might look good on my résumé when applying for a good place in heaven:

Name: Julia Bud

Birth: February 2, 1975

Death: Hmm . . . I don't want to die young - how about at eighty? So that would be ... 2055. Sounds good.

Notes: Well, you see God, I made this deal ... and ... Well, I have no soul. That OK? I hear you have a shortage up here these days, but still ... I'm sure you got one rattling around one of your closets, right? Wrong? Oh well. Well, see ya 'round. Or not I guess...

I can't help myself, I chuckle out loud and a few other tired-looking people glance in my direction for a moment before turning back to their own private thoughts. I look around. Nope, no sign of a scary man with horns and a pitchfork. Guess I'll have to wait around for the stupid train to arrive. Or I could get up and live my life. There is that, I suppose. But I've always liked the sound of a ticking clock. Well, alright, I haven't, but there's always a first, right?

## Joy: a simile

By **Emma Duprey**

*Vernon Elementary School, Grade 4*

Joy is  
As purple as a plum  
Growing on a tree.

## Simile

By **Taylor Bresnick**

*Vernon Elementary School, Grade 4*

Happiness is  
As blue as the sparkling sky,  
Comforting us.

Young Writers Project is an independent non-profit that engages students to write. It provides writing prompts for this newspaper series; maintains [youngwritersproject.org](http://youngwritersproject.org), a supportive online community for students; trains college mentors to provide students with feedback and builds *online classrooms* for schools and after-school programs. For more: [ywpvt.net](http://ywpvt.net). Project blog: [ywpblog.ywpvt.net](http://ywpblog.ywpvt.net)



### DEADLINE NEAR!

Applications are due **APRIL 1** to attend Champlain College's Young Writers' Conference, May 29-31. Great program. For more go to: [Champlain.edu/Young-Writers-Conference.html](http://Champlain.edu/Young-Writers-Conference.html)

## Strange place

By **Marco Tumminia**

*Benson Village School, Grade 8*

I look around  
At the strange characters  
Who surround me  
The creepy old guy  
Straight out of  
A horror film  
A small boy  
With his finger  
At an impossible angle  
A stretcher flies by me  
Carrying a pale child  
His frightened mother  
Tagging along  
I move my feet  
As a splash of blood  
Lands heavily beside me  
Disgusting...  
A man walks out  
Clinging to an oxygen tank  
Another odd spectacle  
Finally  
My name is called  
I leave this room  
And all its characters  
Finally free  
Of this  
Emergency Room waiting room

## My toad: a pantoum

By **Jesse Shirlock**

*Vernon Elementary School, Grade 4*

My toad  
Went up the road.  
He got hit by a truck,  
And then he was stuck.  
He went up the road.  
He climbed my Harley hog.  
Then he was stuck.  
He fell on a log.  
He climbed my Harley hog.  
He stretched his leg.  
He fell on a log.  
My toad.

## Chains

By **Emma Redden**

*Leland and Gray Union High School, Grade 11*

Tonight time has once again proven itself a blessing.

In less than two hundred years

A country has gone from a place where men, Women and children were treated as if the blood running

Under their beautiful mahogany skin

Was not human at all,

To understanding that something as superficial as color

Really holds no importance.

The chains that once

Bound the ankles of men

Now bind something completely different.

They bind the imaginations

And daydreams

And will power

Of those who understand that

They do have the power

To induce change.

Those chains bind

The trust

A nation has in a man

To be the first.

Martin,

Rosa,

Jesse,

Thurgood

All helped lay the bricks

Of the road you now walk.

Tonight you have given

A country renewed confidence

In its own ability

To do what's right.

You have given a sea of eager eyes

A beacon to rest upon.

You have proven

That nothing should

Be deemed impossible.

## Shatter

By **Courtney Perry**

*Bellows Falls Union High School, Grade 10*

Tear drop

Fall down

Stare at

The ground

Broken mirror

Wavering

Expectation

Quavering

Shattered reflection

In your eyes

Such disappointment

Isn't wise

Forgotten dream

Lost in the light

Another day

Another fight

They watch, so rapt

With empty eyes

Shards of bright hope

So many lies

Are you so blind?

Can you not see?

Be on your way

You don't know me

## Birds: A pantoum

By **Madison Ask**

*Vernon Elementary School, Grade 4*

Birds flying over the mountaintop,

Rushing home to their babies.

Rabbits hopping to their home,

You, yourself, running with a basket.

Rushing home to their babies,

With home-made raspberry cookies.

You, yourself, running with a basket,

Stopping and picking daisies by a rosebush.

With home-made raspberry cookies.

The smell of the cookies rising,

Stopping and picking daisies by a rosebush.

Birds flying over the mountaintop.

## Time slows down

By **Dana Lee Wiktorski**

*Benson Village School, Grade 7*

Tick-tock, tick-tock

I wait,

For the time to come,

For the dentist to come.

I flip

Through old magazines,

Waiting...

Thump-thump-thump-thump

My heart beats faster.

I can hardly bear

The wait.

I hear the door creak open.

The receptionist appears.

"Dana?" she asks.

Wait's over.

*On March 17, students, teachers, schools and professional authors participated in YWP's second Vermont Writes Day. For more: [vermontwrites.ywpvt.net](http://vermontwrites.ywpvt.net)*

*One suggested prompt was, "Lately, I've been struggling with..." This piece was posted anonymously:*

## Human nature

Lately

I've been struggling

With everything.

I've always struggled

With things.

I've never been an

Easy-going person.

I struggle.

I am human,

Humans struggle.

It's our nature,

It's the way we deal with things.

We deal with struggle

And when there's no struggle,

We create it.

We create things to struggle through

And have a hard time with

Because life should be

Interesting.

When it's not,

We're bored.

It's human nature.